Studying for a PhD in the School of Indigenous & Canadian Studies: But Why?

A per-zine for
curious family members,
inquisitive friends, &
understandably confused
acquaintances

Or:

Adventures in the life of a
(f)unemployed Canadianist

Murphyao Ink ©
One Zine a Month:
September 2021
www.murphyao.com

Well, I mean, first of all, *why not?* It keeps me off the streets & out of the pool halls more so than street- & pool-hall-related activities would.

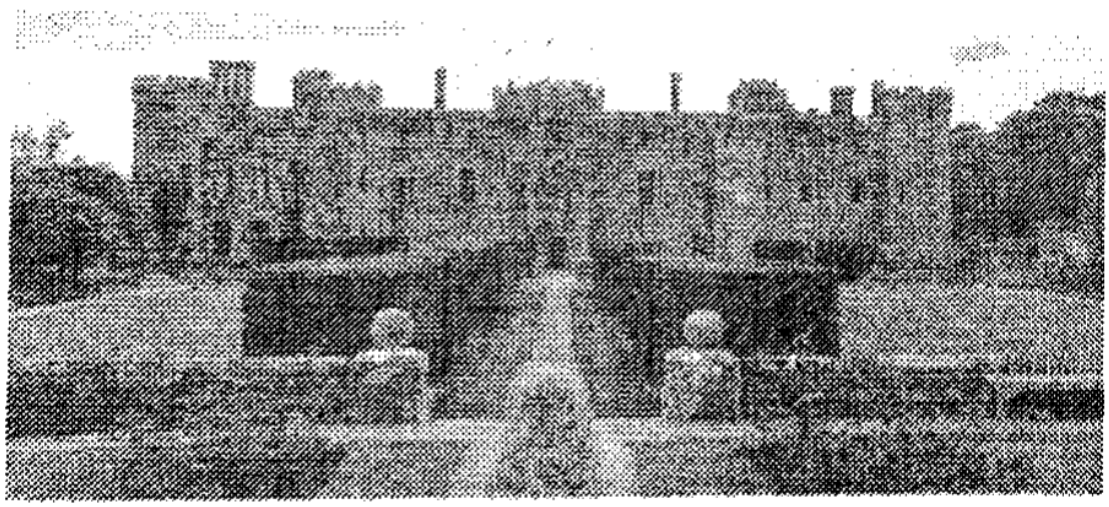
The Real Reason is a combination of happenstance, Harry Potter, & spite (does that sound more believable?).

As a high school student in the US who had never been to Canada, I applied to McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, based solely on the fact that I had heard of it three times because some random guy I met, my one friend's sister (she'll be important forever), & Captain Kirk of the USS Enterprise went there.

Also, 21 vs. 18! Cheers.

The application was pretty great from a US perspective. If I recall correctly, it was one page, no essays required, send some test scores & transcripts, & pay $50 CDN (which was less pricey than other application fees). When I filled out the one page form, I checked some box that apparently said I'd be interested in the Canadian University Study Abroad Program (CUSAP), whatever that could possibly be. (I'd already *be* abroad, in Canada! So it is entirely possible / extremely likely that I checked this box accidentally. Good job, Past Amanda! Making excellent life choices, as usual, that led to astounding results.)

CUSAP turned out to be a program in a castle in England that had been used in the filming of the Harry Potter movies, so off I went to meet a gaggle of Canadians in the United Kingdom (having never travelled to either country).



H/T to Queen's U (in Ontario) for accepting Jewish student Alfred Bader in the 1940s when McGill & U of Toronto wouldn't because of institutional anti-Semitism. Please rub this fancy castle in their faces.

When I got to this cool castle in the middle of fields of sheep where we practiced archery & lived thirty minutes from the nearest fire station (not an exaggeration), these Canadians informed me of many heretofore (to me) unknowns, such as: (1) The United States stole Alaska from Canada (what?! This will form part of my subsequent dissertation.). (2) Canada burned the White House down in the War of 1812 (*The Arrogant Worms* have a song about it. Here I had thought I was paying attention in high school history -- for the most part -- because the canoe trips & stabbing reenactments were on point [nyuk nyuk].

I guess I *did* pay enough attention in high school history since I knew it was *technically* the British North Americans who torched the White House in 1812. Canada started in 1867 because of the US Civil War & Fenians?!?!) (3) The capital of Saskatchewan (a real place) is Regina (rhymes with "vagina"). That last one sounded like bullsh*t to me, too, but it's *true* and they don't even *laugh* (the much) when they say it because apparently it means *queen*. = (4) CANADA HAS A QUEEN! This was also news to my mom. *Anyhow*, these Canadians made *so much* fun of me and my roommate from New Hampshire for being

ignorant USAmericans who didn't even understand Celsius or centimeters or metric of any kind that I decided to load up on Can(adian)-content courses when I finally made it to McGill. Plus, in the UK, I had studied British history, art history (in the damn Louvre!), & other study-abroad-themed courses, so I figured I'd continue that tradition by studying-Canada-as-a-broad. Plus I had gotten a philosophy exam question about Canadian leafs wrong because I was very confused why it wasn't spelled "leaves," so I had a lot to learn.

In the end, I accidentally wound up with an undergraduate major in Canadian Studies... which led to an MA in Canadian Studies... & now I'm in the doctoral program in the recently renamed School of Indigenous & Canadian Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, which is the capital of Canada, & I'm hella good at Canadian history trivia (but almost nothing else so please don't ask what my life skill set is because the study of Canadian visual culture is not exactly paying the bills).

And now you know: Regina is pronounced like "vagina."

Here's your honorary degree.